



## Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact [support@jstor.org](mailto:support@jstor.org).

## DISCUSSION

---

### MODERN-LANGUAGE INSTRUCTION IN NORMAL SCHOOLS

When the first normal schools were founded in the United States in the late thirties and early forties of the past century, the modern languages were not made a part of the curriculum for the reason that there was no great demand for teachers in these subjects in the secondary schools. But as time passed, and the courses were enlarged and broadened, and as the modern tongues became a part of the course in our public secondary schools, French and German were added to the normal-school training, along with Latin and Greek.

It is a matter of interest to inquire whether under the influence of the study of education and educational methods in normal schools the method of instruction in modern languages has shown improvement beyond that found in the colleges and universities, which until late years have made but little of the study of methods.

This problem may be approached in various ways but it must be solved, no doubt, by a combination of several methods. The best method would be personal visitation of the classrooms by a competent judge. But since no one person is able to visit any great number of classrooms in the various sections of the country, we shall probably never have an estimate based entirely upon this method.

An auxiliary method is to note the textbooks used and the statement concerning courses and methods used in the schools as published in their catalogues. And finally acquaintance with the teachers themselves, their training, general scholarly activity, and the books they publish, forms a fairly reliable criterion of their classroom work.

For the purposes of this study personal visitation was made use of to some extent, principally in the schools of the Central West and the Northwest, and the results of such observations are included in the data on methods given below. Beyond this the methods in use were determined from catalogues, and more especially inferentially from the description of the courses in the catalogues.

As to the textbooks used in normal schools the decided tendency to use the less bulky grammars would indicate that less stress is laid on grammatical minutiae and more upon the ability to read, or to read and speak. Beyond this there is little divergence from the books used in colleges and universities.

There is little information available concerning the preparation of the teachers of modern languages in normal schools, but it has been shown<sup>1</sup> that normal-school teachers as a whole have rather inadequate preparation and that inbreeding is prevalent in these schools. Certain it is that the teachers of modern languages do not figure at all prominently in the meetings of the Modern Language Association of America, nor in the various state and sectional modern language associations, as may be seen by running through the volumes of the publications. There are comparatively very few scholarly contributions by normal-school teachers. Meriam<sup>2</sup> has shown that the proportion of works by normal-school, high-school, and college teachers is 5, 13, and 48.

One should expect, however, that under the influence of the study of educational methods in the normal schools the teachers of the modern tongues would have become dissatisfied with our old style of textbooks and would have demanded better long ere now, when the direct method is being imported from Europe.

But such has not been the case. Rather have they been content to use much the same texts used in colleges and universities and even in the high schools. And they have furnished proportionally far fewer modern language texts than have the college teachers. An examination of the catalogues of four of the most prominent publishers of modern language texts in the United States discloses the fact that normal-school teachers have furnished less than 5 per cent of the grammars, introductory books, and manuals of composition and conversation published in this country.

However, after this rather adverse arraignment, which must certainly, in great part, be laid to the penny-wise-and-pound-foolish custom of overloading the teacher with teaching in these schools, it must be recorded that the teachers of modern languages in normal schools have made more rapid advance in the actual classroom use of the direct method than have their colleagues in the colleges and universities.

The direct method aims to teach the foreign language for the greatest part without the intervention of English. Grammar is thoroughly taught, although partially inductively, and in small instalments, while conversational ability is considered a valuable by-product. This method which is now in the opinion of most competent judges the most

<sup>1</sup> J. L. Meriam, "Normal School Education and Efficiency in Teaching," *Teachers College, Columbia University, Contributions to Teaching*, No. 1, New York, 1905, pp. 119 ff.

<sup>2</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 149.

effective is used in 13+ per cent of the 117 normal schools investigated,<sup>1</sup> but is used in only 5+ per cent of our colleges and universities (890 modern language departments investigated). And this must be attributed, it seems to me, to the emphasis laid on the study of methods in normal schools. Here is a group of teachers who in point of training and of time to devote to research are less fortunate than the college and university men. But they have, under the continual needs and inspiration of pupils whom they are training for a specific service, striven to give to their students not only a knowledge of the grammar and the literature, but of the spoken language as well. To be sure, this advance is not phenomenal but it is noticeable—as we will show still further.

The grammar-reading-conversation method is an excellent method. It consists in making the start with the grammar, in English, but reading forms the center of the instruction, with conversational ability as a third object. To achieve the last the texts are often discussed in German instead of merely translating the entire passage into English. This method is the most prevalent one in normal schools and is found in 51+ per cent of these schools, whereas it is used in only 37+ per cent of the colleges and universities.

The grammar-translation, or grammar-reading method, is a distinctly inefficient method which aims to teach by means of paradigms and set translation, after the time-honored fashion of instruction in the classics. This method is used in 42+ per cent of the colleges but in only 23+ per cent of the normal schools.<sup>2</sup>

CHARLES HART HARDSCHIN

MIAMI UNIVERSITY

<sup>1</sup> Space does not permit tabulating the entire data, but the normal schools investigated are distributed as follows: Alabama, 3; Arizona, 2; California, 4; Connecticut, 4; Colorado, 1; Georgia, 1; Idaho, 2; Illinois, 4; Indiana, 1; Iowa, 1; Massachusetts, 8; Maryland, 2; Michigan, 3; Minnesota, 6; Kansas, 2; Kentucky, 3; Louisiana, 1; Maine, 4; Missouri, 5; Montana, 1; Nebraska, 1; New Jersey, 2; New Mexico, 2; New York, 9; North Dakota, 2; Ohio, 4; Oklahoma, 2; Pennsylvania, 12; South Dakota, 3; Texas, 4; Virginia, 3; Vermont, 2; West Virginia, 4; Washington, 2; Wisconsin, 7. The more prominent schools were investigated. Seven of the list each taught no modern language.

<sup>2</sup> It may be of interest here to note some facts concerning the general status of the modern languages in the normal schools. For statistics on this instruction see the author's *The Teaching of Modern Languages in the United States*, United State Bureau of Education, 1912 (to appear soon).

German is, as might be expected, taught mostly in the Central West and the Northwest, while French is taught principally in the South and East. And it is specifically prescribed in some cases in New England. Spanish is taught in the normal schools of New Mexico, Arizona, Ohio, and sporadically elsewhere. Italian is found in only one school in our list. German is taught in 72 of these schools and French in 45.